

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

1.-10. (canceled)

11. (new) A method for reporting a malfunction of a faulty network node in a communication network comprising a plurality of network nodes, comprising:
receiving a fault report of a faulty network node by an operable network node;
determining if the fault report has been forwarded; and
forwarding the fault report by the operable network node to all network nodes directly adjacent to the operable network node if the fault report has not already been forwarded.

12. (new) The method in accordance with claim 11, further comprising sending a fault report by a faulty network node to all network nodes directly adjacent to the faulty node.

13. (new) The method in accordance with claim 11, further comprising:
sending a message from the operable network node to all the network nodes directly adjacent to the operable network node, the message to be acknowledged by the adjacent nodes;
creating a fault report for a network node from which an acknowledgment was not received; and
sending the fault report from the operable network node to all the network nodes directly adjacent to the operable network node.

14. (new) The method in accordance with claim 13, wherein
wherein the created fault report relates to a faulty network node if all neighboring network nodes of the faulty network node identify a fault for the faulty network node; and
wherein the created fault report relates to a connection to the network node if not all neighboring network nodes of the network node identify a fault for the network node.

15. (new) The method in accordance with claim 11, wherein a network node performs additional network activities related to the fault in response to the receipt of a fault report.

16. (new) A communications network node, comprising
a receiver that receives a fault report of a faulty network node;
a forwarding mechanism that forwards the fault report to directly adjacent network nodes;
a checking mechanism that checks if the received fault report has already been
forwarded; and
a transmission controller that forwards the fault report if the outcome of the checking
mechanism is negative.

17. (new) The network node in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:
a fault detector that detects a fault; and
a sending mechanism that sends the fault report to directly adjacent network nodes.

18. (new) The network node in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:
a message sending mechanism that sends a message from the operable network node to
all the network nodes directly adjacent to the operable network node, the message to be
acknowledged by the adjacent nodes;
a fault generator that generates a fault report for a network node from which no
acknowledgement was received, and
a fault sending mechanism that sends the generated fault to directly adjacent network
nodes.

19. (new) The network node in accordance with claim 18, wherein the message is
sent periodically.

20. (new) The network node in accordance with claim 19, wherein the periodic
message is sent to continuously poll directly adjacent network nodes.

21. (new) The network node in accordance with claim 18, further comprising:
a fault identifier that determines if all network nodes adjacent to a faulty network node
identify a fault; and
a fault report characteristic that relates the fault based on the fault identifier,

wherein if all network nodes adjacent to the faulty network node identify the fault, the fault report characteristic relates the fault to a faulty network node, and

wherein if not all network nodes adjacent to the faulty network node identify the fault, the fault report characteristic relates the fault to a faulty connection.